

Message Text

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51

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 IO-14 OMB-01 OPR-02 SY-10 PC-10

AID-20 PM-07 NSC-10 SPC-03 SAM-01 SS-20 RSC-01

CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-04 USIA-15 PRS-01

EB-11 COME-00 DRC-01 /185 W
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P R 021300Z FEB 74

FM AMEMBASSY LOME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7264

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY ACCRA

AMEMBASSY COTONOU

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L LOME 0268

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, TO

SUBJ: CRASH OF PRESIDENT EYADEMA'S AIRCRAFT

REF: LOME 0261

1. BANNER HEADLINES IN TOGO-PRESSE THIS MORNING (27 FEBRUARY)
QUOTE PRESIDENT EYADEMA AS HAVING SAID TO MILITANTS IN SOKODE
YESTERDAY:

"OUR DECISION TO CONTROL EXPLOITATION OF OUR PHOSPHATES ALMOST
COST ME MY LIFE. WE ACCUSE THE CTMB AND NOT THE FRENCH
GOVERNMENT."

2. LONG SUPPORTING ARTICLE BY TOGO-PRESSE CORRESPONDENT BETHEL
APEDO-AMAH IS BASED ON EXTEMPORANEOUS SPEECH BY PRESIDENT AT
SOKODE, WITH RESULT THAT IT IS DIFFICULT TO DETERMINE WHICH
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QUOTATIONS ARE DIRECT, WHICH INDIRECT, AND WHAT IS WRITER'S

VIEW. ACCORDING TO ARTICLE, PRESIDENT'S SPEECH WAS LARGELY A LONG RECITAL OF HIS VERSION OF EVENTS IN GOVERNMENT'S RELATIONS WITH PRIVATE PARTNERS IN PHOSPHATE COMPANY (CTMB) LEADING UP TO HIS UNILATERAL DECISION TO DENOUNCE AGREEMENT WITH COMPANY, TAKE OVER SALES, AND ASSUME FOR GOT TITLE TO 51 PERCENT OF SHARES IN COMPANY, AN ACTION WHICH HE SAID WOULD PROVIDE TOGO WITH INCOME OF 18 BILLION CFA FRANCS PER YEAR (ALMOST 70 MILLION DOLLARS, OR MORE THAN TOGO'S ENTIRE 1974 BUDGET OF 62 MILLION DOLLARS).

3. PRESIDENT IS QUOTED AS SAYING "WE HAVE NO DIFFERENCE WITH FRENCH GOVT. GOT HAS 'AFFAIRE' ONLY WITH PRIVATE PARTNERS OF CTMB." HE ALLETES THAT SHORTLY AFTER HE SUCCEEDED IN INCREASING GOT'S PARTICIPATION IN COMPANY TO 35 PERCENT, THERE OCCURRED, BY COINCIDENCE, AN "ACCIDENT" IN WHICH HIS AIRCRAFT FAILED TO GET OFF GROUND DURING A TAKEOFF FROM LOME AIRPORT AND ENDED UP OFF RUNWAY IN BUSH. FINALLY, HE SAID, AFTER HIS RECENT MEASURES HAD POISONED RELATIONS WITH GOT'S CTMB PARTNERS, THEY DECIDED TO LIQUIDATE HIM PHYSICALLY.

4. COMMENT: IF THIS IS EYADEMA'S IDEA OF REPLYING TO FRENCH DEMAND FOR MISE-AU-POINT (REFTEL), IT IS A BIT HARD TO SEE HOW IT SERVES ITS INTENDED PURPOSE. NEVERTHELESS, IF GOF WISHES, IT CAN ACCEPT STATEMENT AS AN ADEQUATE IF AWKWARD GESTURE OF APPEASEMENT. MANY FRENCH RESIDENTS OF LOME WILL NOT BE SO EASILY SATISFIED, HOWEVER, AND SOME ARE PLANNING TO BE AWAY FROM LOME THIS AFTERNOON WHEN PRESIDENT MAKES HIS TRIUMPHAL RETURN FROM NORTH AND APPEARS BEFORE CROWD AT RPT BUILDING. NEWLY ARRIVED UNDP RESREP, A FRENCH WOMAN, HAS ISSUED WRITTEN INSTRUCTION TO ALL UN PERSONNEL TO REMAIN OFF STREETS FROM 1300 GMT TODAY UNTIL TOMORROW MORNING. FRENCH CHARGE RIDICULES THIS, AND CLAIMS TO HAVE ISSUED NO WARNING TO HIS COMMUNITY. WE HAVE MADE LOW-KEY SUGGESTION TO MISSION STAFF AND, THROUGH PC DIRECTOR, TO LOME PCV'S THAT THEY AVOID CROWDS THIS AFTERNOON. WHILE WE ARE TAKING ROUTINE PRECAUTIONS AT CHANCERY (WHICH HAS BEEN PROVIDED TWO-MAN POLICE DETACHMENT AT TOGOLESE INITIATIVE), AND PRINCIPAL RESIDENCES, I SEE NO REASON TO EXPECT TROUBLE. US AND CTMP PARTNER W.R. GRACE HAVE NOT BEEN MENTIONED IN ANY OF STATEMENTS BY PRESIDENT OR OTHERS AND AMERICANS ARE NOT THUS FAR TARGETS OF TOGOLESE RESENTMENT. SHORT OF AN IMPRUDENT
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ACTION ON THE PART OF AN INDIVIDUAL, THERE SHOULD BE NO INCIDENTS INVOLVING US.
DICKINSON

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NNN

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TAGS: PINS, TO, FR, CTMB, (EYADEMA, ETIENNE)
To: STATE
Type: TE
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